

THE LION-KINGS OF LANKA

A POEM IN TWO EPISODES

By
THEO. W. LA TOUCHE

(WITH A FOREWORD BY
MR. PAUL DARE, NEWS EDITOR OF *The Times of India*.)



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FOREWORD

IT is with some trepidation that I pen this foreword to the work of my friend and colleague, Mr. La Touche, whose knowledge of Indian mythological literature so far transcends my own. Proof-reading is usually an ordeal, but when I responded to his kind request that I should see the proofs of this work through the press, I found it a sheer delight, for the story grips one as one reads, and surely no more appropriate form for its setting could be chosen than that adopted by the author: the Spenserian epic metre. There is indeed in this story a breadth of canvas, a noble scale that, could they have read it, would have appealed spontaneously to the hearts of Malory and Spenser, and Mr. La Touche has effectively conveyed it, without losing any of the deep and essentially Hindu symbolism that underlies all these mythological epic tales.

As he himself remarks, the resemblance to certain Greek legends is so striking as to render comment upon it almost superfluous; but one notes also how much more refined and spiritual is even the story of the union between the princess and the lion than any parallel in the materialistic Greek deology. One feels that Hellenistic culture borrowed much from Eastern sources, transformed, and in many cases degraded it; and the fact that the *Mahawamsa* only dates from the fifth century A.D. means nothing, for

all great epic traditions are handed down orally for centuries before they are codified into writing.

Students of Hindu mythology will be struck by the extraordinary resemblance between the central portion of *The Lion-Kings of Lanka* and the *Mahābhārata* story of Kṛishṇa as the eighth incarnation of Viṣṇu at the end of the Dvāpara, or third age of the world. According to this legend, not given in the earlier portions, but found in the Purāṇas, particularly book 10 of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, Kṛishṇa was the eighth son of Devakī, one of the two wives of Vasudeva, who was the descendant of Yadu and Puru, founders of the Lunar Dynasty. It was predicted that one of these eight sons would kill Kansa, king of Mathurā, and cousin of Devakī. Kansa therefore imprisoned Vasudeva and his wife and slew their first six children ; the seventh, Balarāma, however, was magically transferred from the womb of Devakī to that of Rohiṇi, the other wife, and was thus saved. The eighth was Kṛishṇa, born with a black skin and the mark called Śrīvatsa on his breast. With him his father Vasudeva escaped, by the aid of the gods, and found a herdsman named Nanda, whose wife Yaśoda had just given birth to a daughter, which infant Vasudeva took to Devakī in substitution, while Nanda brought up the child Kṛishṇa with his own sons. And then in the *Bhāgavad-gītā* we find Kṛishṇa as the nephew of Paṇḍu and cousin of Arjuna, the hero of the epic, whose chariot he consents to drive, and who gives counsel when Arjuna has qualms of conscience about wading to a throne

through the blood of his kindred in the struggle between the families of Paṇḍu and Dhṛitarāshṭra. This counsel, usually called *The Song of the Adorable One*, is one of the most beautiful and sacred pieces of all Indian literature. So far as I can discover, not one of all the Sanskrit scholars and editors of the epics has noticed this analogy.

Some association between all these ideas and myths there must surely be ; in part they are all recognisable as a folk-memory of some actual struggle between two great Kshatriya tribes for supremacy, so far as the “ action ” portions of the story go ; but, traced to their dimmest beginnings, we find their origin in the twilight of the gods and the dawn of man’s speculation on the Infinite, in his veneration of the sun-god and the moon-god, the corn-spirit and the great Earth-Mother ; and through it all there runs that silver thread, surely of divine inspiration, of a noble faith in the ultimate triumph over evil of true love, and good, and justice.

The Times of India,
BOMBAY, 15th January, 1933.

M. PAUL DARE.

INTRODUCTION

REFERRING to the Mahawamsa, or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon, in his "Ceylon," one of the most comprehensive and authoritative works written about that interesting island, Sir James Emerson Tennent observes: "It stands at the head of the historical literature of the East; unrivalled by anything extant in Hindustan, the wildness of whose chronology it controls; and unsurpassed, if it be equalled, by the native annals of China or Kashmir." His opinion has since been endorsed fully by all eminent oriental scholars.

In his editorial preface to Prof. Wilhelm Geiger's literal English translation of the Mahawamsa, Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids, the well-known Orientalist, has observed: "It is true there is considerable literary merit in the original poem, and it may be possible hereafter to attempt a reproduction also in English unrhymed verse."

While admitting the justice of his remarks, it must be stated with equal fairness that a complete metrical rendering of the Mahawamsa, though possible, will be of little interest to the general reader of narrative poetry, interwoven as it is with the history of the introduction of the Buddhist religion into the island, and its subsequent development. The only exceptions, to my mind, are the portions dealing with the advent of Wijaya and the founding of the Great Dynasty.

It is for this reason that I selected the story of the dynastic pioneers, who were Kshatriya Hindus from Bengal, for metrical treatment in two episodes. Any one who looks for a faithful adherence to the original in my work will be utterly disappointed. I have taken the original as a mere outline and worked in the details. Further, I have even taken great liberties with proper names found in the original, some of which I have altered to suit the exigencies of English versification, while I have entirely changed others, and invented a few. But in doing all this I have aimed at congruity.

I need scarcely point out the remarkable similarity between the story of Wijaya and the Yakkhni, and Homer's account of Ulysses and Circe. Sir Emerson Tennent says: "the resemblance is so striking that it is difficult to conceive that the Singhalese historian of the fifth century was entirely ignorant of the works of the Father of Poetry." It is equally probable that Homer himself borrowed the story from Eastern sources, especially from India, which is the home of story-telling. The story treated in my second episode may be taken as a pendant to the Greek story of "The Doom of King Acrisius," which William Morris has so elegantly retold in his *Earthly Paradise*.

There appears to be abundant evidence to show that the Great Kings of Ceylon belonged, not to the Brahman or priestly caste, as asserted by some writers, but to the Kshatriya or warrior caste. The famous

Chohan princess, Padmini, who married one of the Ranas of Chitoor in Rajputana, was the daughter of a prince of Ceylon. It is clear that the Singhalese kings of "the Superior Dynasty," founded by Wijaya, claimed to be the descendants of the Sun, as do the Ranas at this very day. They were, therefore, the inheritors of all the chivalry that is associated with the Kshatriya character.

Customs and manners change very slowly in the East, especially in India, if they ever do change; and the customs and manners illustrated in these episodes are almost the same as those prevailing at the present day. I have appended a few notes to help Western readers not acquainted with the East.

THEO. W. LA TOUCHE.

SECUNDERABAD (Deccan),

16th September 1932.

THE LION-KINGS OF LANKA

EPISODE I.—*The Coming of Wijaya.*

WHO thrills not with delight when fair Ceylon
Is named—the brightest gem of all the isles
The Indian ocean girts with sapphire wave !
All nations of the earth from earliest times
In singing of her loveliness have joined ;
The Rishis, in their epic rhapsodies,
Of Lanka the Resplendent sung ; the Buddhists,
E'er dreaming of their Land of Bliss, extolled
Her as the peerless pearl on India's brow ;
The proud Celestials called her Isle of Jewels ;
The Greeks, the Haycynth and the Ruby Land.
The Persian and Arabian mariners,
Bewitched by vistas that before them lay,
Chequered with scented meads, pellucid lakes,
And fruitful groves, and streams, and winding vales
All opening seaward ; and the woods that flowed
Like a green mantle from the soaring peaks
And met the waves—by such fair landscapes charmed,
They lingered many months within her *Gobbs* ⁽¹⁾,
Serene of coral, canopied by palms ;
And to their barren coasts returning rich
With cinnamon and precious stones and pearls,
Diffused soul-thrilling tales of Serendib,
Where mankind's exiled parents lived consoled
For loss of Eden, in their new-found bliss
Forgetting it as if it ne'er had been.

And then, the venturous navigators famed,
Of Europe, sweeping round the Indian shores,
In eager search of trade, stood wonder-wrapt
To breathe the fragrance wafted from her groves,
When far at seaward of the island yet
They hung ; and reaching her enamelled strand
Beheld the Eldorado of their dreams !

Such is the Isle where, in the misty past,
A lion-born race of kings held sovereign sway :
Their glorious state, the greatness of their minds,
Are blazoned still by cities, lakes and fanes,
All wondrous in their beauty of design,
In thought sublime ; in skill of workmanship,
Though rivalled other-where, yet unsurpassed.
Whence came these royal builders to the isle,
Whose tangled woods primeval, legends say,
Were peopled by the Yakkhas (²), a wild race
Demoniac, skilled in magic lore profane ;
And how, by gods befriended, they set up
A prosperous kingdom, famed for every art
Of peace and war—it is our aim to tell
In numbers simple as the *slokes* inscribed
On palm-leaf books, wherefrom the tale is culled.

What time Lord Buddha walked this tearful earth,
There reigned o'er all the fruitful Wanga land,
Through which the sacred Ganges flows, a king
By all his people loved. The daughter fair
Of the Kálínga monarch was his spouse ;
Their only child a daughter ; passing sweet

She was, and very amorous withal ;
No lotus-bud unfolding 'neath the moon
Could rival her in beauty. At her birth
The seers foretold her marriage with the king
Of beasts ; whereat the king and queen were vexed
With grief and shame. They watched her like a miser
His gold : but who could strive against the stars ?
Yearning for joy of life from trammels free,
She stole forth from the palace unobserved,
Despite all vigilance, and joined forthwith
A convoy that for Maghada was bound.
By all her royal father's searchers keen
Untraced, she journeyed. After many days
The caravan, drawn by the slow-paced oxen,
Entered the Lala country's forest glooms,
When from the shadows sprang a lion ; huge
Of bulk and limb he loomed ; his copious mane
Descending from his massy head, like tawny
Cascades adown a hillside, brushed the ground
On either flank. With flaming eyes and roar
Of thunder fell he on the caravan ;
This way and that, in dire confusion fled
The panic-stricken folk, unto their gods
Loud-screaming for protection ; but the fair
Kamala, driven by the inward urge
Of destiny resistless, fled along
The very path whereby the lion had come.
Returning cloyed with prey, the jungle king
Beheld the princess from afar ; straightway
Love for her seized him, quelling all his rage ;

And he, with waving tail and ears laid back,
Approached her, as a hound his master would,
And she, remembering her horoscope,
Dismissed her fears and, boldly stepping forth,
Caressed him fondly, stroking flank and limb.
Beneath her tender touch his blood caught fire
Like forest grass in summer-time, and roused
To fiercest passion, her he promptly took
Upon his ample back, and speedily
Conveyed her to his dreaded mountain cave,
And there espoused her. By the union strange
Twin-children did the princess bear in time—
A daughter and a son. Sihahbahu,
The lion-armed, she named the boy, because
His hands and feet a fair resemblance bore
To lion's paws ; the girl, unlike her brother,
Displayed a dainty shape, that shone like gold
New-burnished ; so the princess in her joy,
Her Ranliya—" The Golden Creeper "—named.

Within that cavern, opening on a glen,
But buried deep from view by jungle growth,
The princess reared her children ; their sole fare
The flesh of wild beasts by the lion slain,
With berries supplemented, and the shoots
Of bamboos, honey pillaged from the bees ;
Their drink the silvery stream that tumbled down
The clefts and formed a limpid tarn below.
Thus nurtured plain, the twins grew up apace,
And soon knew every nook of the ravine,

But broke not bounds, obedient to the wish
Of their dear dam ; though strong the urge to see
What lay beyond—urge whetted by their dreams,
Deep tintured with the wondrous tales they heard
Of ancient chivalry, from lips of her they loved,
And ever worshipped. But when rains sixteen
Had come and gone, and fragrant-vestured Spring
Reigned o'er the wilds again, the stripling showed
Uncommon prowess : stones that needed five
Strong men to raise, he used like playing-balls ;
And tore stout saplings up. No less agile
His sister ; blending with a dryad's charms
The litheness of a deer, with him she vied
In swimming in the lake, or clambering up
The dizzy crags for honey ; and their minds
Lagged not a whit behind the body's growth.

It chanced one day when the fierce noontide sun
Drove birds and beasts to seek the shadows cool
Of bower and grot, and hushed the valley lay,
Alone the princess and the twins repaired,
As was their wont, unto the limpid lake
Now flecked with lotus-blossoms. There canopied
By creepers stretched from tree to tree and laced
So closely that the sun but filtered through
To make a soft green twilight all around,
They lounged ; the young folk listened to a tale
Their mother told of human princess reft
Long ago, from the bosom of her lord
Beloved, and prisoned by a monster vile,

Pined many a day. Not tardy to perceive
Grief's quaver in his mother's flutelike voice,
The youth, disturbed by galling doubts, inquired :
" Wherefore are you, dear mother, and our sire
So altogether different in all ways ;
And why, confined within these savage wilds
We stay, like joyless hermits, all inert,
When much is to be won of noble fame
Through valour in that jostling world of men
You oft-times told us is not far from here ? "

She poured forth all the story, hiding nought,
And warned him of his mighty father's will,
Standing betwixt them and the world of men
Than loftiest mountains more immovable,
More perilous to cross than shifting sands.
But he, no whit afraid, and vext therewith,
Yet breathing not a word more, lifted her,
As though she were a babe, onto his shoulder
Ample, and ran full swiftly from the place,
His sister running by his side with ease.
Ere sundown they had covered many a league
And left their native mountains far behind ;
Nor slacked their pace nor rested even then,
But tireless plied their legs beneath the moon.
Dawn found them where the jungle stopped and tilth
Began to show. Here halted they at last.
With needed rest refreshed, and ripening corn
From cobs, they wrapped their nakedness about
With glossy plantain leaves, and so approached

A border-village of the Wanga realm.

Here at the time sojourned the Princess' cousin,
A chieftain in the royal army who
Was given lordship over border-tracts.
He sat that morn, a rough-hewn stone his seat,
Under a many-shafted banyan tree,
Dispensing justice to the rustic folk,
Who on the ground before him sat, their hands
Conjoined respectfully. Now, when he saw
The princess and her children there arrived,
Their sylvan garb amazed him much ; but more
The women's beauty took him ; wonderstruck
He questioned who they were and whence arrived.
They simply answered, " We are forest folk."
Thereat he bade his people give them clothes
And food ; then lo, those garments coarse became
Resplendent, and the leaves whereon the food
Was served, turned into plates of shining gold—
So potent is the touch of innocence !

Then wonder grew to awe ; for they were deemed
Beings divine in mortal guise, come down
Upon some errand from on high, to bless
Or ban, who knew ? With palms together joined
The chieftain prayed them say their hest sublime :
What sacrifice was wanted, or what gifts,
Or shrine, however costly, to appease
The mighty gods, and he, their servant meek,
Would do it straightway ; but the princess smiled

Thereat, and told him frankly who she was,
Her family and clan. His fears gave place
To joy intense, and love for her. Forthright
He took her and the twins upon his car,
And, sending tidings to the king, ahead,
He set out for the Wanga capital.
Its gates he entered, midst rejoicings great,
That greater waxed, when on the following day
Her noble cousin did the princess wed,
And all the city rang with feast and dance.

Now when the lion, from his daily hunt,
Returning to his cavern, missed his mate,
And children dear, grief beat upon his heart
Like a madman on a drum ; afar he roamed,
Disconsolate, and seeking after them
He raided villages ; and everywhere
He came, the folks fled at his very name ;
Leaving their homes and husbandry, they fled,
And hastening to the king, complained against
The tawny terror. He in duty bound
His subjects to protect as his own children, had
His elephant paraded through the streets,
While heralds shouted : “ Lo, this wealth is his
Who dares to bring the king the lion’s head.”
But none came forward, so the king enhanced
The guerdon twofold and then threefold. Twice
Did Sihabahu’s mother hold him back ;
The third time, he, his mother’s leave unasked,
Took on the task to bring down his own sire.

Then spake the king to him and said : “ Young man,
If thou shalt slay the terror of my realm,
Even my kingdom will I give to thee
The moment thou accomplish this great deed.
To witness which here is my royal signet ring :
No sacrifice too great I reckon, if thereby
My people’s welfare is assured.” So saying
He from his finger drew the golden ring
Set with a blazing ruby rare, and slipped
It on the prince’s, wishing him good hap.

And so dismissed with blessings by the king
The prince, well armed with bow and arrows, reached
The lion’s cave. The great beast saw him come,
And sped to meet his son, his drooping heart
With joy now fraught, and love untold.
The prince let loose a shaft ; it took his sire
Full ’twixt the eyes, but like a talisman
The beast’s love for his son (³) did blunt the shaft
That, harmless, bounded off. And so it fell
Out thrice ; then wrathful grew the king of beasts ;
And the next arrow found his heart, and down
He rolled at his son’s feet ; but ere death closed
His eyes for ever, gasping faint he said :

“ My son ! although thy hand hath laid me low,
My evil *Karma* (⁴) urged it to this act ;
For in a former life, a tyrant fierce,
I ruled a mighty realm, and hunting down
My people like wild beasts was my chief sport,

Till they, grown desperate as a cornered wolf,
Conspired and slew me as their worst of foes ;
And lo, the lion's shape, which now I quit,
Is of my *Karma's* fruit the milder part :
The worser part is to be slain by thee,
The darling of my heart—my tale is told."

This said, the lion died ; the prince returned
Triumphant to the city, bearing high
The lion's head, its once-proud flowing mane
Now grimed, but to those folk a pleasant sight.
He found the Wanga king had passed away
What time he slew the lion ; but the lords,
Rejoicing greatly at his deed, redeemed
The monarch's pledge, and crowned him king.

Not long he held the sceptre, when the love
Of his own native land, possessing all
His soul, he to his mother's husband passed
It on, and with his sister and a train
Of trusty folk left for the mountain wilds ;
There built the thriving city, Sihapur—
The Lion Town—and cutting down the woods
For miles around, established villages,
That shewed like islands midst a rolling sea
Of corn and pasture. There held sovereign sway
Great Siha, king of all the Lala realm,
When he,—as was permitted in those days,—
Had taken his twin sister, Ranleya
To wife.

In time the queen bore thirty sons
And two, of whom the first was Wijaya named ;
And in due time the king elected him
Prince-regent. Gifted with a lion's strength,
And pluck, the worst traits of the beast alone
He shared, and comrades even like himself
He owned ; so many were his evil deeds
And heinous, that the people, galled beyond
Endurance, begged the king redress their wrongs.
Appeasing them with honied words, the king
Rebuked his son. But all fell out again
Worse than before, until to fury lashed,
The citizens demanded of the king
To either slay his son or banish him
For ever. Grief poignant gripped the king,
For dearly did he love his errant son,
Yet dreading insurrection, of the two
Courses he chose the milder. Causing half
His son's head to be shaved, as slaves are wont,
And likewise all his boon companions' heads,
He thrust them on some barks at Sopra port ;
And so in dire dishonour sent them forth
To seek a home beyond the rolling seas.

Now when Lord Buddha, Beacon of the World,
His saving mission compassed, and the stage
Utmost of blissful rest attained, upon
The mystic threshold of Nirvana lay,
By twin-like sala-trees o'ershadowed, he,
The Sage omniscient, seeing there the gods

About him hovering all in reverent awe,
Spake to their sovereign chief, even to Sakra (⁵),
Whose sceptre is the thunderbolt, and said :

“ O Lord of gods ! Wijaya, banished son
Of Sihabahu, king of the Lala realm,
Has even while I speak, with all his train
Of twice a hundred men, the coral strand
Of Lanka reached ; so it was fore-ordained,
That, tossed by wind and wave for many a day,
By numerous woes and perils sorely tried,
He should be tempest-driven after all
To Lanka, there to found a glorious line
Of kings, and plant the banner of my faith.
Vouchsafe thy guardian care, him and his folk
To shield from every harm ; though fair the isle,
And pleasant as thine own celestial groves,
And though not peopled by aught human race,
Hospitable or hostile, great the risk
To strangers from the evil powers that lurk
Unseen, than venomous snakes in flowery meads
More prompt to strike unwary treaders down.
Wherefore deign thou to hasten to their aid :
To thee their welfare I consign entire.”

The last word barely left the Blessed one's lips,
When Sakra vanished thence, and reappeared
That self-same moment in far Lanka's isle,
Cleaving the air with his ethereal wings,
Thought-swift. In full view of the stranded folk

He sat beneath a tree, and seemed a sage
In contemplation deep. To him they went
With hands conjoined and said :

“ O reverend Sire,

Forgive the rude intrusion, and be pleased
To tell what land this is whereon the fates
Relenting, landed us, sad wand’ers long
On ruthless seas forlorn.”

The sage replied :

“ This Island fair is Lanka called ; no men
Inhabit here ; but fear ye nothing, for
No mischief will befall ye, so the stars
Proclaim in sooth ; but rather all good hap,
Full compensating all your troubles past,
Nathless, to make my bodement doubly sure,
Take now this matchless charm ; possessing it
All powers malign of heaven and earth, or both
Combined, however subtly potent, must,
Against their nature, bend to work your weal.”

So speaking, Sakra bade them all draw nigh,
And water sprinkling on them from a jar,
Bound Wijaya’s wrist with talismanic thread,
And melted into air. Then for a god
They knew their kindly guide, and marvelling much,
That Heaven should befriend them, graceless waifs ;
Yet cheered withal, returned they to their barks,
Now riding calmly in a quiet cove.

The evening meal, from remnants of their store
Prepared, they ate, and night descending fast,
Some stood at guard, for much their wary chief
Dreaded the unknown terrors of that land,
Despite the hermit's charm ; the others prone
By heavy toil outstretched, soon slumbering lay.

Embosomed in the mountains was a dell
Completely hidden from all view ; most fair
It was, with lush grass carpeted, and pranked
With flowering shrubs, and trees fruit-laden ; in
The 'midst thereof a pool pellucid gleamed,
By ever-purling streamlets fed, and flocks
Of water-lilies graced ; the livelong day
Resounding with glad notes of bird and bee,
That glen a corner seemed of paradise
In sooth. Alas, therein no angels dwelt,
But fell Kuweni ; for of a Yakkha town
It was the outpost, and the sorceress
The warden ; chosen for that very task
Because she all the women of her tribe
Excelled in magic arts ; unnumbered were
The hapless seafarers she ruthless lured
To their destruction ; much the precious spoil
She garnered from their heavy-laden ships,
No vessel passing there escaped her eye ;
No human wight, once landed in the isle
E'er lived to leave its shores, or make his home
Thereon. Engrossed the witch was, even now,
A trap devising for the new-come folk.

With her hand-maidens, agents of her wiles,
She sat, conferring in a cave the best
Part of the night, her accents blending with
The screech-owl's racket, the lugubrious howl
Of jackals on the prow, and panther's cough
Terrific ; and when the stars began to pale,
Her wicked plot complete, she duly set
Her creatures each to play her rôle assigned.

Meanwhile, Prince Wijaya and his folk awoke,
To find the sun had climbed a spear's length
Above the eastern peaks : they rose refreshed
By sleep, but hungry ; empty was their bin.
So they to gather berries, roots and nuts
Abounding on the isle, of divers kind,
Dispersed ; but not before their careful chief
Forewarned them not to roam beyond the reach
Of earshot from the ship, nor stray too far
One from the other ; but among them one,
More headstrong than his fellows, spied a cur,
Black-coated, passing by, and heedless quite
Of Wijaya's wholesome warning, trailed the dog,
Taking its mere presence for a sign
That nearby was a village, where arrived
He better fare would find than forest fruits.

So dreaming, he the mongrel dogged ; unscaresd,
The creature, at an easy lope, led him,
By mazy paths into Kuweni's dell ;
For she a Yakhni damsel was, that shape

Assuming to decoy ; with wagging tail
She sought her mistress' feet, and there lay down
Amongst her fellows, even like herself
Of canine form.

Kuweni spining sat

Under a tree, beside the lotus pool,
And seemed an ancient woman-anchoret,
Devoted wholly to a life severe
Of penance, prayer and toil ; the dogs her sole
Companions seemed, and guardians too, against
Unfriendly beasts. Her kindly eyes lit on
The man invitingly, and he, his hopes
Of village joys now dashed, but nothing scared
To see a harmless crone, bathed in the pond's
Cool waters, drank his fill, and lotus seeds (⁶)
Delicious plucked. Ere he emerged therefrom,
Well pleased, Kuweni started to her feet,
And holding up her finger, " Stop ! " she hissed,
" Thou art my victim." Baleful gleamed her eyes,
The while, with all the demon's lust for blood.
And like the fabled serpent's prey, the man
Stood conjured stiff beneath her gorgon gaze ;
But touched by Sakra's holy water once,
He was unslayable ; so, impotent,
She gnashed her horrid teeth ; then shooting forth
Her hand across the pool, full nine ells length,
She seized her hapless victim by the waist,
And hurled him, shrieking piteously,
And reft of wits, adown a chasm dark,
Whence none of woman born had e'er escaped.

And in like manner with all Wijaya's men
She even dealt, as they, one after one,
Came, seeking their companions, to the dell ;
And, plunged in anguish, there they moaned forlorn.

Now Wijaya, scanning all directions hard,
Stood long upon his prow ; in dire suspense
Of mind he stood ; and when the faintest glimpse
He caught not of his men's return, he feared
The worst ; but not for nothing was he named
Wijaya ' the Valiant ' ; so his fears but spurred
To instant action ; in full panoply
Of faulchion, battleaxe, bow, buckler, spear (7),
Equipped, he hastened to their succour ; reached
The dell, and there beheld Kuweni by the pool,
Bending quite harmless o'er her spinning wheel.
So occupied she seemed, as not to be aware
Of aught around her. Wijaya, wary chief,
Perceived no footsteps there but those of men,
All leading down into the pool, and thought :
" In sooth this woman must have seized my men ; "
And asked her : " Lady, hast thou not here seen
My men ? " Whereto she mockingly replied :
" What with thy people wantest thou, O Prince ;
From them what pleasure canst thou e'er derive ;
Drink thou and bathe, ere thou departest hence. "

Then all his doubts dissolved, he thought : " Forsooth
A Yakkhni manifest—she wots my rank ! "
And shouting forth his name, upon her pounced,

Like lioness on the stealer of her whelps ;
And deftly with his bow lasooed her round
The neck ; then drew her nigh to him, and seized
Her locks, and lifting high his sword, that gleamed
As deadly as his eyes, above her, " Slave ! "
He roared, " Restore my men to me forthwith,
Or ere thy wicked head, dissevered, roll
Into thy pond, food for the fish."

He spake,

And she, enraged, but by great Sakra's charm,
That bound his wrist, subdued, despite herself,
Sunk down in abject panic to her knees,
Clasped both his feet, and, " Spare, O spare
My life, great prince, " she whined, "and I will aid
Thee conquer this fair island, rich with wealth
And bliss beyond all dreams of earthly men ;
To reign its sovereign lord and found a line
Of kings whose fame shall never die ; nay, more,
Reign thou my bosom's sovereign, and thy will
Shall be my god, thee shall I worship, serve,
And fill thy days and nights with happy hours."

She ceased ; and sobbing sore, his feet bedrenched
With copious tears ; but he, though inly moved,
Suspicious still of some more subtle snare,
Yet longing much the promised rose to pluck—
If so he might the lurking asp avoid—
Discreetly said : " Kuweni, ere I grant
Thy supplication, and thy proffered love

Accept, seal thou the compact with the oath
Inviolable, to god Kubera, lord
Supreme of all thy tribe, whose dreaded name
Invoked in vain, damns one to endless births
In lowest planes, than hell or death far worse."

When she was sworn, to instant proof he put
Her pledge, and charged her to his presence bring
His folk ; full quickly she complied ; and, freed
From musty dungeon gloom, the captives trooped
Into the golden air ; and as a flock,
Unpenned at dawn, with merry bleatings seek
The luscious mead, they, joyful, sought the Prince,
And stood before him, blinking in the sun
Awhile : then gratitude past words found vent
In tears withal, as one by one his feet
With finger tips they pressed in homage meet,
And felt like long-lost children to their sire
Restored ; then he, no less rejoicing, gave
Kuweni leave to play the hostess. Prompt
She bustled with her damsels, who returned
To their own shape, and from her ample store
Of various victuals, pillaged from the ships
Whose crews she had destroyed, produced the best
Of wholesome rice and tempting condiments.
With these the men, preparing savoury meats,
And many a confection rare besides,
Spread first the royal feast before the Prince,
And then regaled themselves, the pleasant dell
Echoing with their merry laugh and jest.

Then Wijaya, of the noble Kshatriya clan
With his own hands, as rules of caste required,
The Yakkhni's wants supplied. And when she ate,
The first part of the meal, well pleased therewith,
She shed her wrinkles, as an actor skilled,
When playing many parts in sequence quick,
Shuffles his costumes. Now she stood before
The Prince, a comely virgin of sixteen
In fresh bloom of her loveliness confest ;
With fragrant jasmine garlands crowned, and clad
In shimmering golden tissue, pearl-besprent,
That more than plainly hinted what it hid,
She shone out smiling as the summer sky
Smiles with the risen moon—a fairy queen !
Her jewelled trinkets jingling in cadence sweet,
And breasts a-swaying soft, like lotus buds
By Zephyrs fanned, she tripped up to the Prince
And round his neck the marriage-garland threw ⁽⁸⁾,
And stole his heart with an impassioned kiss,
And, “ Come beloved ” crooned, “ now that we are
Wedded Ghandharva-wise, ⁽⁹⁾ why longer stay
Apart ? Come, let us, sconced in yonder bower,
Our nuptial love's fulfilment duly seek.”

So saying, she pointed to a lofty tree,
And lo, beneath it sprung forthwith a gold
Pavilion, curtained round with rich brocade
And hung with clustering silver bells, that made
A tremulous music in the breeze. Thereto
She led the Prince, who entering, found a couch

Magnificent, of sandalwood, all carved
About with amorous idylls and inlaid
With flaming gems. Therein they lay night long
In bliss immersed, while all around the bower,
Encamped the Prince's men.

Now, as the night wore on,
The Prince, roused from his slumber by the sound
Of music strange and singing, gently woke
His Yakkhni bride, and asked " What means this rout
So weird, and whence proceeds it ? " Hearing it
She thought : What better chance avails than this
To give dominion to my lord, the Prince ;
My solemn pledge thus to redeem, and save
Myself withal. For all the Yakkhas must
Be quelled forthright, or else, they blaming me
For opening Lanka to the human race,
Will certes slay me : wherefore, will I help
My lord to quell them now and reign sole king,
With me his queen."

Thus pondering, to the prince
She said : " Nearby a Yakkha city stands,
Siriswathu named ; the daughter young,
Of Kalasena, Chief of all my tribe,
Who dwells in Lanka City, has been brought
Hither to wed the Lord of this demesne ;
And even now, the week-long festival
To celebrate the spousal rites hath gained
Its pitch meridian ; hence the noise you hear ;

For a great multitude is gathered there
In revelry. But hearken to the rede
That my unbounded love for thee impels
Me give : the Yakkhas, dulled with wine and feast,
Do thou, surprising, slay with sword and spear,
Giving no quarter ; see thou set to work
Even to-morrow ere the sun drink up
The beaded dew ; if thou let slip the time
Auspicious I have named for thy emprise,
By but a wink, no longer harbour hope
Of triumph, but prepare for ruin red,
That surely then must all of us engulf :
But mount the willing steed of lucky time
And thou shalt ride to victory and fame ! ”

She spake ; and, dubious, he rejoined : “ How slay
The Yakkhas who, adept in magic arts,
Can at their will change shape, or disappear,
Or baffling by illusion, make me beat
The empty air till, as in blind-man’s-buff,
They laugh at me.” “ Trust me,” she answered quick,
“ ’Tis thou shalt be the laugher ; mark me well :
Whereso thy Yakkha enemies, viewless lurk,
There will I also lurking, utter cries ;
Strike even at the sound with all thy might
And groans of death will follow every stroke,
As thy keen weapon, guided by my power,
Shall cleave their heads. Then stricken lifeless, thou
Shalt see their corpses stretched prone in the dust.”

She ended : he, delighted with her words,

Close crushed to his her bosom, and betwixt
Hot kisses murmured out his thankful heart ;
And so in Kama's toils emmeshed they lay
Until the jungle-cock's reveille call (¹⁰),
Not like the farmyard rooster's clarion, shrill,
But mellow,—with the golden oriole's
Soft flutings blending sweetly, woke the pair
From dreams. Then arming quickly he address
Him to the fray, and tutored by his bride,
Upon the Yakkhas single-handed swooped
Like ravenous lion upon a grazing herd,
And joyed in slaughter, she his weapons keen
Directing with her halloo. Priceless spoils
Untold of gold and gems and raiment fine
The victor reaped ; of these the royal robes
Resplendent, of the Yakkha prince and princess,
He and his consort wore ; the rest among
His followers divided ; and some days,
Rejoicing o'er his triumph, Wijaya spent
With all his people in that pleasant spot.

Appointing then, a governor o'er that tract
With men and means to rule it in his name,
He to another region of the isle
Passed on, and built a mighty city there,
Naming it Thambraparni from the dust (¹¹)
Of copper hue that covered all that land,
There dwelt he happy with his Yakhni mate
In kingly grandeur, and amongst his men
Now raised to noble rank, he parcelled out

The realm and each, a baron of wide lands,
Built cities here and there, both great and small,
And beast-infested jungles driving back.
With axe and fire, planted fruitful groves,
And fields of corn. Their pioneering work
Accomplished, all the feudal lords then came
Together at the Prince's court, and spake
To him with one accord and said :

“ Vouchsafe,
O Sire, to let us consecrate and crown
Thee sovereign monarch of this island realm
With all due solemn ritual, as befits
The great event ; so we, thy vassals bound
By sworn allegiance to thyself and throne,
May help thee lay a basis, for thy heirs
And ours, to raise an empire, world renowned,
Thereon. This is our counsel and our prayer
That, moved by duty, love and gratitude
Combined, we now submit for thy assent.”

So they importuned ; and he pensive sat
A space, then thus replied : “ My noble friends !
And partners staunch of both my joys and woes,
My heart in this concurs with yours entire ;
Wisdom and love lie mingled in your rede
As milk and honey in a jewelled cup !
Yet never shall I with unholy hands
Besmirch the kingly sceptre, and offend
The mighty gods ; for well ye wist, my friends,

The sacred custom of our ancient race,—
That none durst violate and live in peace,—
Commands that kingship be conferred on none
Who to a consort from a royal house,
Coequal with his own in caste and tribe,
Is not allied, however just and high
His other claims. Now, judge, my noble lords,
If I, enlinked, by destiny constrained,
To a Yakkhni, am entitled to accept
Your kindly proffered crown, and still remain
Within the ambit of the law, from guilt
Exempt ? My conscience clearly answers, ‘ Nay.’
Wherefore, though much it nettle me to cross
Your goodwill, justice this compels me say :
As some triumphant arch sublime, designed
To grace a noble structure, is imposed,
Only when the supporting shafts are found
Full worthy to uphold its stately pomp
And splendour ; even so the crowning ye
Propose must needs depend upon the law’s
Fulfilment, that rightly aimeth to ensure
The regal office its authority and strength,
Inseparable from majesty enthroned ;
Which else, exposed to scorn, fails in its aim,
And ends in public scandal and disdain.
My scruples thus unbosomed, bound therewith
I needs must patient wait the change of times,
To square all matters and enfreedom me.”

So he dismissed them ; but they lost not hope ;

For reading clear his argument's main drift,
Their bent to consecrate him, keener grew ;
And taking counsel, they speedily despatched
As embassy unto the emperor,
Who ruled the Pandyan realms, to seek the hand
Of his fair daughter for their king-elect ;
And other maidens nobly born, to seek
As wives for them, his liegemen tried and true.
Loading their barks with pearls and precious stones,
Which Lanka yieldeth plentiful as her fruits,
The embassy, of all their wisest bards
Composed, set sail for India's neighbouring coast,
And reached Madura ; there the emperor
Of all the Southern kingdoms held his court ;
Arrayed in splendour like the sun, he sat
Enthroned, amid the Princes of his realm,
And Lords a myriad ; at his feet the bards
Of Lanka laid the priceless gifts, and pled
Their Prince's suit in numbers sweet, that chained
All listeners' hearts ; the monarch pleased therewith
Gave his consent ; and all his councillors,
No less delighted, applauded all his words
In unison, and promise made withal
To let their daughters with the Princes go
To Lanka, and the barons there espouse.

And so a hundred of the fairest maids,
All nobly born and reared, the king received
That selfsame day ; nor did his bounty stop
Thereat ; he had this proclamation made

By beat of drum : “ If any citizen
Be willing to allow his daughter go
To Lanka, he shall ere to-morrow’s sun
Grow hot, place her with double store equipped
Of raiments at the threshold of his house.”

Thus did the king obtain a bevy fair
Of damsels. And when they assembled sat
Within the royal audience hall, the hour
Awaiting of departure, they appeared
The nympholepsy of some poet’s dream
Come true ; the many coloured blossoms sweet,
That flaunted in the king’s parterre without,
Not half so lovely seemed as they ; in rich
Attire of varied dye, and decked from head
To foot in clinking gold and gems they shone—
In sooth the gamut whole of female grace.
And charm was mustered in that hall, which vied
With Indra’s gardens filled with Apsarasis.
Amidst them, like the central ornament
On beauty’s brow, the dainty princess shone.
But grief at parting from her parents dear,
And dreams of coming bliss, like inter-play
Of sun and shadow on a limpid pool,
Illumed and gloomed by turns her tender eyes.

The mingled blare and roar of conch and drum
Announced the king’s arrival in the hall
To lead his daughter forth with all her train
Of damsels to the fleet of galleons

That rode upon the swell in proud array,
And ready to hoist sail ; then mounted all
On glistening chariots, drawn by noble steeds,
And hung with chains of flowers, they moved towards
The ships with minstrelsy ; the princess rode,
The great procession heading, with her sire ;
Before the royal chariot paced a band
Of Brahmans, chanting solemn Vedic hymns ;
And so along a lane of citizens,
Who showered blossoms on them, and withal
God's blessings, came they thus unto the sea
And filled the ships ; and farewells said,
The white-winged fleet for Lanka ploughed its course,
By favouring breezes sped. Beside the freight
Of damsels and their retinue, were borne
Horses and chariots worthy of a king ;
A thousand households of the eighteen guilds, ⁽¹²⁾—
All cunning craftsmen—and of precious things
Great store, besides the princess' marriage dower.

Now ever since he knew his nobles' plan,
His scruples to annul and make him king,
Prince Wijaya pondered o'er the best pretext,
To put away his Yakkhni wife ; and when
He heard his Pandyan bride-elect set foot
At Mantota, and Lanka's western coast,
Kuweni he addressed in honied words,
Saying : " The hour, dear one, hath struck, when we
Must part for aye ; for earthly mortals fear
Superior powers ; and fearing thus, who could

In constant partnership of bed and board
Live happy all his days ? So go, dear one,
Leaving behind our children twain, thy gifts
Of love to me ; for, nothing shall they lack
Of father's love and duty. Never shalt
Thou be forgotten by my folk and me,
Nor by posterity ; lo, in this town
A fretted shrine to thee shall be upreared
With lands endowed enow, for priestly keep,
And worship meet, and daily sacrifice.
Now let us part in lovingwise, as ships
In the same haven, lying side by side,
Their business done, put forth to different parts ;
Or as two birds of different plumage, perched
On one tree for the night, wings each his way
When morning breaks ; so even must we go
Our separate ways, obedient to the hest
Of time ; why then regret or bitterness ? ”
He ended ; pendent stood her glist'ning tears,
As sighing deep, she said : “ Thy plan, O Prince,
To cast me off, its why and wherefore, all
Was known to me, as soon as formed ; then why
With false pretext of fear excoriate
My broken heart ? No whit amazed am I
Thou shouldst forswear me for a Kshatriya queen ;
But I expected thou wouldst let me still
Live on beneath thy roof, at least thy slave ;
And never dreamed thou wouldst requite my love
And loyal service with the pain extreme
Of banishment ; thou hast pronounced no less

Than doom of death on me ; for my own tribe
Will certes slay me, fenceless and forlorn,
As cause of all their ills ; yet must I go
Obedient to thy will, true to my pledge
To serve thee even to the bitter end.
One boon deny me not, I pray ; our twins,
Our boy and girl, their mother's banishment
Let share ; lest a far worser fate befall
Them, meritless, of step-dame tyranny,
And scorn, the portion of the lowly-born.
But ere I go to meet my fate, I must
Unfold the future to thy view : thy reign
Shall prosperous be and peaceful ; but unblest
By children thou shalt die ; nathless, the son
Of Sumita, thy brother, shall receive
Thy sceptre, and a line of glorious kings
Proceeding from him and his Sakya queen,
Shall make this isle renowned throughout the world."

She spake, and with her children hastened straight
To Lankapur ; and even as she feared,
By her own folk was slain ; her children twain,
Albeit, fleeing thence, asylum found
Among the trackless Malya mountain crags ;
And from them sprang at length the hardy tribe,
Of hunters skilled in every jungle craft,
Pulinda called, still peopling those wild tracts,
Above which soars the peak from Adam named
And sought by pious pilgrims to this day.
Meanwhile, Prince Wijaya with a suite of Lords

And warriors, posting, all in royal state,
Reached Mántota ; and there the Pandyan Lords
Presented him the Princess with her dower,
Besides their liege lord's other gifts untold ;
Next they delivered him the maidens, all
In order due. This done, the Prince bestowed
On them resplendent robes of honour rich ;
And on his lords and vassals, each a maid
Conferred, according to his rank ; then round
The sacred fire himself the Princess led,
While Brahmans chanted nuptial benisons
And showered saffron rice upon the pair.
And waving o'er their heads, in Lakshmi's name,⁽¹⁸⁾
Garlands of emeralds, pearls and rubies rare,
In handfuls scattered them amidst the guests.
These joyous rites performed, the brides and grooms
Mounted on lordly tuskers, richly decked,
Returned, escorted by a numerous host
Of horsemen, footmen, charioteers, all armed
And brightly clad, a dazzling pageantry,
To Thambraparni. There amidst a full
Assembly, Wijaya was anointed king
Of Lanka by his ministers, and, he,
With his own hands, his consort crowned as queen ;
And all the city rang with jubilee
For many days and nights, as high and low,
Loaded with favours by their bounteous king,
Cast off the daily fret and grind of life,
And gave themselves entire to feast and mirth.

So Wijaya, cast upon the perilous waves,

Like worthless jetsom that would sink a ship,
Did heaven, obedient to Lord Buddha's will,
Employ to serve the Law sublime ; and he,
His former evil life forsaking quite
For righteous ways, reigned there as sovereign lord
Of Lanka eight and thirty peaceful years ;
And every year to his sweet consort's sire,
A wondrous shell-pearl, valued many times
A thousand gold mohurs, and fit to grace
An emperor's diadem, he sent as gift,
In token of the boundless love he bore
That other peerless pearl that e'er adorned
The sea of his existence—his fair queen !

THE LION-KINGS OF LANKA

EPISODE II.—*The Builder of Anuradhapur.*

KING Wijaya, in the autumn of his life
Arrived, bethought him : “ I am old, and must
The Mansions of the Sun⁽¹⁾ full soon attain ;
The Yakkhni’s curse still on me heavy lies,
For childless I am, and this island realm,
So hardly won and peopled, with my death
May come to nothing, to no son of mine
The sceptre passing ; wherefore, fain would I
My brother Sumita have hither called
From Sihapur, and to his hands commit
The sceptre, ere from my death-loosened grasp
It drop.”

So mused the king and, due advice
Obtained, a missive to his brother sent ;
But hardly had the bearer left the isle
Than it was kingless ; and a regent ruled
Till Vasudev, the youngest of the sons
Of Sumita, instead his sire, too old
To journey far, accepted Wijaya’s call,
And with a band of youthful knights arrived
In Lanka. Over him was duly raised
The royal parasol ; but not before
He wed Kassena, of the Sakkhya king
The only daughter ; even as a maid

Compounded all of Champak blossoms sweet,
And sunbeams, she appeared ; her comeliness
Enthralled all hearts, and seven kings renowned,
For lover of her, sent precious gifts to win
Her hand ; but since the soothsayers forewarned
Her father that a voyage most happy would
Befall her ere she wed, upon a ship
Shaped like a graceful swan of silver plume,
He placed her with a splendid marriage dower,
And two and thirty handmaids therewithal,
And on the spirit-cleansing Ganges launched
The vessel, saying, “ Whoso can, let him
Now take my daughter.” Many then pursued,
And hot the chase, but, like a phantom swan,
The vessel down the river swiftly rode
And mocked her suitors : steered by unseen hands
The Silver Swan soon reached the rolling deep
And, skimming o’er the billows merrily,
Stood, even on the second day, upon
A haven’s opal bosom verdure-girt,
Her glorious shape thereon portrayed ; so they
Fair Lanka reached ; and as the stars ordained,
The Princess Vasudeva’s queen became.

Ten sons the queen bore, and a daughter sole,
The youngest of them all ; when Brahmans skilled
In sacred texts beheld her, they foretold :
“ The son born of this princess, for the throne,
Will certes slay his uncles.” Scared therewith,
The brothers, save Abhaya, eldest born,

Resolved to slay her, but Abhaya stayed
Their hands ; withal they rested not in peace
Till they their hapless sister saw immured
Within a rock-hewn cell : access to it
Was none, but through a passage in the king's
Bed-chamber, narrow, winding, dark ; but one
Small window, iron-grated, high above
The ground without, scarce let the sun and air
To struggle through. Within the dismal cell
The heartless brothers placed a serving-maid
Of their own choosing and without, a guard
Of hundred soldiers. As a nestling, torn
From parent birds and caged, frets not nor pines
For loss of liberty, its loss not knowing,
And grows and thrives as happy as its free
Compeers, so even tender Chitra, wrenched
From her fond mother's bosom by rude hands,
And prisoned as a potent foe, grew up
And shewed such maiden plumes and charms,
That never man could see her, but was fired
Straightway with frantic longing for her love :
Wherefore they named her Unmada-Chitra—
Mad-making Chitra ! As her budded youth
Unfolded charm by charm, there came to her
The longing of the blossom for the bee,
And bird for bird, and maid for man, until
Her bosom's hunger growing keen, she asked
Her maid, " Why when the birds and beasts, I see
Within yon park below, roam where they list,
Rejoicing with their mates—why I alone

Those pleasures am denied ? ”

The servant-maid,
Though sworn to serve the princes' cause, bethought
Her of the sweet young creature's piteous plight,
And all the woman rushing to her heart,
Melted in tears ; and she revealed to her
The truth ; whereat both clasping close wept long,
The sorrow sharing. Then the hand-maiden,
Her sense of duty drowned in sympathy
Entire, a solemn promise to befriend
The princess uttered, come whatever may.

In vain do mortals labour to avert
The doom the high gods have for them decreed !
As well essay to hoodwink grisly eld,
Disease and death, and live for e'er on earth.
So while the princes dwelt in joyful ease,
Lulled thereunto by fatuous hopes that they
Had locked up with their sister's maidenhood
All fears, and cheated Fate therewith for aye,
The high gods at their folly laughed aloud,
And sent Prince Gamani the fatal web
To weave. The queen's own nephew, young and brave,
He was, and handsome as a god withal.
This prince dwelt with his father, Dighayu,
In a fair province of the island ; there
The fame of Chitra's wondrous beauty reached
His ears and cast its spell about his heart ;
And as a traveller's witching tale of hills

Of gold and valleys strewn knee-deep with gems,
In lands far-off, some venturous spirit drives
Upon the quest, the bruit of Chitra's charms
Filled all the prince's nights and days with dreams
Of love, and spurred him seek the cause of this
Unrest ; and springing on a steed, he drew
Not rein until he gained Upatissa,
The Royal Capital ; nor rested there
Till he betimes had audience of the King,
And making known his father's name and rank,
Sought service at the court. The monarch, pleased
To have a young man of so gallant port
At hand, appointed him a chamberlain,
And captain of his household guard beside.
Now in the very lists installed, where lay
The fount of all his dreams, his pulses danced
With joy of expectation vehement,
And urged him headlong rush and feast his eyes
On her ; but fear of wrecking all his hopes,
So near fulfilment, by one reckless step
Suspicious, held him back ; betimes, pretext
Of duty aided him, and with a panting heart
He stood beneath her window in the park,
The Royal Guards reviewing, one would say ;
But all his thoughts were on the window fixed,
And glances stole he upward now and then.
There soon appeared to him the fairest face
That ever eyes beheld—why waste more words ?
Their glances mingled and two shafts unseen,
Tipped with the mango-flower, pierced each a heart,

Whilst Kama Deva laughed ! Then, sighing deep,
The princess asked the woman-slave, " What man
Is that, if he be not some god disguised ? "
And she, adept in gossip of the court, replied :

" No godhead he, but certes by the gods
Here sent in answer to thy prayer and mine,
Thy life to lift from gloom to sunshine ; yea,
None other he than thy own mother's kin,
Prince Gamani, drawn here to court, they say,
In quest of royal favours, honour, fame ;
But trust me, thy fair self his only quest,
Thy beauty's blazoned fame his lodestar sole.
Now even I rejoice to see thine eyes
Reflect the idol in thy heart ; so grieve
No more, for Radha hath her Krishna now ! "(2)

" Ah, Radha hath and hath not," sighed the maid,
" So near her joy and yet so far ! thy words,
My friend, are nectar to a bird at large,
But, oh, their very sweetness makes them taste
Gall-bitter to a caged-up bird like me :
My grief more galling now, since I have seen
And cannot have, than when I merely dreamed
Of pleasures vague, now definite made and dear.
Thy talk of sunshine springtide maketh not
In this dark bosom, where a transient gleam
Hath made the clouds but murkier than before.
Ay me ! ay me ! this tomblike cell, my tomb
Must be indeed, if he come not to me—

That god whose merest sight hath made my heart
To flutter in my bosom like a bird
Within the nest, that sees its mother come
Bearing a juicy morsel in her beak.
Ah, fain would I abide herein for aye,
Far happier even than in paradise,
If he but come to me like that same bird,
And feed my famished heart with his sweet self !”

To whom the bondsmaid : “ Ever is it thus !
Love brooks nor time nor circumstance, but needs
Must soon as kindled, blindly rush to seek
Its object, fretting if its path be stopped
Awhile ; so like an infant forced to bide
Appointed hours of play. But lady, school
Thyself to patience, till love, mightier far
Than Fate, and full as sure, fruition find :
Rest thou assured, no efforts I shall spare
To play the fervent midwife in this case,
To help and lead it on to glorious issue.”

Thereat did Chitra’s wistful eyes, like two
Dark lotus pools kissed by the morning’s beams,
Light up with radiant hope : her lissome arms
She quickly flung about the slave, and tears
And kisses spoke her joy too deep for words.
And even that same night Prince Gamani
The treasure of his quest held in his arms :
For to her window by a ladder made
Of cords he climbed, the slave let down, and wrenched

The bars, like waxen tapers, wide apart,
And so got in. Night after night he spent
With his beloved, quaffing deep the wine
Of Youth's rich vintage. None beside his fair
One and her bondmaid and the silent stars
Beheld him come and go ; for deeply swilled
With potent arrack, their good captain's gift,
The guards snored nightly at their posts, unchecked.
But as each tree and shrub must needs confess
Betimes its dalliance with the lusty Spring,
In fragrant tales of blossoms, even so,
Love's secrets must be self-revealed at last !
Wherefore it fell out that the blossoming
Of these young folks' romance became the theme
Supreme of courtly gossip, till the king
His sons to counsel called and gravely said :

“ Behold the dam ye reared against the sea
Of Fate, and fondly deemed secure, now leagued
With Kama Deva's conquering tempest, threats
To burst and gulf the honour of our house—
To Kshatriyas dearer than a thousand lives—
In blackest infamy unthinkable ;
So in the name of all we sacred hold,
It now behoves us rally to the breach,
And baulk the imminent ruin ; let forthwith
Prince Gamani, full worthy of her hand,
Be with your sister joined in wedlock bonds,
And foul-mouthed scandal ever silenced be.”

He ceased ; the eldest prince alone, his heart

To mildness e'er inclined, his father's rede
Approved without demur ; the rest replied :
“ Let them be wed, but we have firmly vowed
To crush the ominous fruit, if it turn out a son.”
And so the lovers round the sacred fire
Circled, and watched with joy Arúdati,
The double-star, hung by the gods on high
As perfect pattern of connubial love ;
And even as with rays commingled shone
That star, so did their hearts with love's sweet flames.

Now when fair Chitra's motherhood drew nigh,
Her brothers, frenzied with unrest, cut down
Kapil and Kala, loyal henchmen twain,
Of Gamani, who scorned to be suborned
To slay their master's child, if born a boy ;
And these, reborn as Yakkha wizards, watched
The coming child. Meanwhile the princess laid
Her plans to foil her brothers' fell design :
She, through the medium of the bondmaid, found
A woman, like herself, upon the eve
Of motherhood, who, for a thousand coins
Of gold, consented to exchange her babe
For Chitra's. And, it chanced, the woman bore
A girl-child, but the Princess brought to light
A boy possessed of all the corporal marks
Of greatness ; and, the changeling ruse performed,
She had it blazed : “ The Princess hath a girl.”
The king's sons, scanning close the babe, rejoiced
To see the baleful prophecy belied—

So Fate deludes the mortals it hath doomed !

And Chitra and her friends no less rejoiced
To see the prosperous launching of their plans,
And strove the harder to advance them on
To utmost triumph. At the Princess' hest
The bondmaid laid Prince Pandu (so they named
The new-born infant) in a basket, such
As rustic women use to carry food
To toilers in the fields, and with it poised
Upon her head, she set out for the village
Of Dwaramund. It was the merry month
Of Phalgun,⁽³⁾ which, as ancient use enjoined,
All Kshatriyas usher in with hunting down
The savage boar, a sacrifice most dear
To Gouri, goddess of good harvests famed.
And so it happed the king's sons at the time,
All gaily clad in vernal garments green,
Were bent on hunting in the Tumbra woods,
And chanced to meet their sister's serving-maid,
Then hastening with her precious burden ; their
Suspensions roused, they asked her, " Whither bound,
And what hast thou within thy basket, woman ? "
She promptly answered : " I am going home
Unto my village, and these cakes I bear
Are for my daughter." " Take them out at once,"
They ordered—Lo, a mighty tuskéd boar,
The biggest they had ever seen, just then
Broke cover at their horses' feet ; and off
The princes thundered down in hot pursuit,

All else forgetting in that moment, save
Their quarry rare ; their Kshatriya blood afire
With glamour of the chase irresistible.

The beast, a phantom conjured up by those
Two Yakkha guardians of the infant, lured
His eager hunters ever on and on
Into the forest depths ; up hill and down,
Through matted thorns and *nullahs* deep, he tore,
Oft letting them gain ground, and full as oft
Outpacing them when they their lances poised
To hurl. The day declined, and still the whoop
And halloo of the chase rang through the woods,
As still the phantom lured the huntsmen on.
At last their coursers, spent and flecked with foam,
Stood trembling, mindless of the spur and whip ;
And they, perforce, gave up the fruitless chase,
To find themselves benighted 'midst the wilds
With thirst and hunger vexed, and failure blank,
And leagues away from farm or hut withal.

Meantime the bondmaid, speeding on her way
With fear-lent pinions, safely reached her goal,
And seeking out the herdsman, Ayut, said :
“ Lo, my good mistress, Princess Chitra sends
Thee this, her child, whose life his uncles seek,
To be reared as thine own, and held in trust,
Until thou hear from her again ; withal,
These thousand gold Mohurs she bade me hand
Thee for thy trouble.” Ayut, of the friends

Of Chitra trusted most, and ever loyal, took
The infant ; and as on that very day
His wife bore him a son, noised it abroad :
“ My wife hath borne twin sons ! ” And so the boy
Was nursed with Ayut’s child, and nothing lacked
Of loving-kindness, ever watchful care.
And so once more the Princess and her friends
A triumph scored, and greatly they rejoiced.

Now, when the princes from the airy chase
Came home, unwitting how they were befooled,
The serving-woman like a spectre rose
Before their minds ; and plagued by haunting doubts,
They sowed the land with spies, to be forewarned
If danger raised its head. And so it happened,
When Chitra’s son, now grown a lusty lad
Of seven, frolicked with the herdsmen’s boys,
Whilst tending cattle in the pasture lands,
His uncles knew the truth, and sent their men
To seek and slay the boy. The favourite sport
Of Pandu and his friends was in a pond
To swim and dive ; but none could longer keep
Submerged than Pandu ; much admired,
The feat was nathless but a simple trick !
Its secret he revealed to none, and none
Had guessed : for in the pond there grew a tree
Whose trunk was hollow with an ample slot
Below the water, and another higher up,
But smaller : Pandu dived and promptly slipped
Into the hollow hole and when he wished,

Returned the selfsame way ! One afternoon
The boys were at their wonted sport when down
Upon them swooped the slayers, and to make
More certain of their prey, they slew the lot ;
But Pandu, as the gods would have it, dived
A moment ere they swooped, and so escaped.
And when the princes learnt the tale, their minds
Were eased ; but none the less they kept a watch ;
For slumbering in their bosoms lay their dread,
Unquenchable. Five years it slumbered, till
The news that Pandu midst the herdsmen dwelt
Full merrily, bestirred it, and it rose,
As a fierce python from its stupor roused,
Unfolds its massy coils and rears its head
With sinister, blazing eyes and darting tongue,
Prepared to seize and crush its destined prey.

Again the killers, charged to spare no folk
Found on the pastures, came ; and yet again
They missed their mark ; for on the day they came
It chanced the cowherds shot an elk and sent
Young Pandu to the village for some fire
To roast their prey. The youth went home, but asked
His foster father's son to go instead,
Saying : “ Lo, I am footsore, take thou fire
Unto the herdsmen ; then thou too wilt share
The savoury feast.” Delighted went the boy.
The moment he arrived the slayers drew
A cordon round the hapless folk and dyed
The meadow with their life-blood, sparing none.

And thus the princes' plans went twice awry,
Despite the hopeful tales their bloodhounds brought.
And yet a third time did they wot their doom
Still hung above their heads, when Pandu stood,
A stalwart stripling of sixteen, with arms
That reached below his knees, a certain sign
Of kingship ; and his valour matched his strength
So well, that his compeers would often say :
“ Pandu and Peril were together whelped,
And he the stronger of the twain indeed :
How else is he a stranger unto fear ? ”

But ere the princes acted, once again
Did Chitra sage forestall them : sending gold
Enow for all his needs, she wished her son
Be moved in secret to a distant place
Beyond his uncles' reach. So when the time
Was ripe the herdsman called his ward and said :
“ My son ! dost thou recall the hint I dropped,
When I the tale recounted of thy birth
And destiny, about a time when we
Must part ? Lo, even now that hour hath struck,
And thou must needs lay down the herdsman's staff,
And hence departing, in another school
Learn how to wield the jewelled staff that sways
Far other than dumb herds, but herds withal,
And far more turbulent, more prone to stray
Than those thou hast till now controlled ; hard task
And dangerous, but well within thy scope
Of mind and puissance—thou who art endowed

With two and thirty godly attributes—
Why use long words—to Pandula, the sage,
Thou now must wend ; he dwelleth in the South,
The opulent lord of acres, deeply versed
In *Dharma, Artha, Kama* :⁽⁴⁾ threefold lore,
That makes a perfect man. Thy mother's friend
He is, and sworn to speed thy fortunes on,
Till triumph, falcon-wise, perch on thy arm
With kingship in his talons ! Bear in mind,
Thy uncles are thy deadly foes ; yet fear
Them not, for they must meet the awful weird
That Brahma with His iron nail hath scored
Upon their heads the moment of their birth.
But now to horse ; needs must thou unperceived
Leave here. Here's gold, thy mother's gift to thee ;
And here's the chosen bondman who will guide
Thee on thy way, and serve thy daily needs.
Farewell, dear son ! my blessings go with thee,
And thy fond foster dame's ; disconsolate
She'll sit and moan when she awakes and finds
Thee gone—may all the gods protect thee, son ! ”

He ended ; and they hung awhile in fond
Embrace with brimming eyes and heavy hearts ;
Then parted : and Pandu and his trusty guide
Into the silent shadows rode away,
And till they passed the village fields close hugged
The umbral woods that clothed Mihantala,
The sacred mount, from soaring peak to foot :
Mihántala ! what thrilling memories

Awoke in Pandu's breast, as riding round
Its base he viewed the mount whose pinnacle
Of riven granite, towering a thousand feet
Above a sea of verdure, seemed to kiss
The very stars. How oft he and his mates
Had scaled the breezy summit and admired
The view sublime, that stretched across the isle
From coast to coast ; and how they thrilled to glimpse
The distant ocean glimmering in the sun ; to hear
The booming of the breakers on the beach,
Or fancy they could hear ; how oft they vied
In scrambling up the beetling crags to rob
The crested eagle's nest ! All these and more
Of boyish pranks his fancy fed, and filled
His bosom with a soft regret for things
That were no more, as on he southward rode.
Three nights they journeyed, resting in the groves
By day from summer heat, and when the third
Night's stars began to pale, they reached the town
Named Pandulagama after its lord,
The Brahman sage. The moment that the sage
Knew him for Chitra's son, with open hands
He welcomed Pandu as an honoured guest,
And said : " Thou wilt be king and rule this isle
Full seventy years : learn thou the art, my son ! '
And so he taught him all the Vedic lore
Of war and peace, and everything a king
Should know ; and also taught his own
Son Kanda. Brahmacharya-wise, down at
The Guru's feet both pupils sat and sucked

His doctrines (⁵). As the sun-baked earth,
Touched by the rain, as by a fairy's wand,
Bursts into verdure, even so apace
The scholars showed their mastery of the arts.

Then choosing an auspicious day and hour,
The Brahman gave the Prince enough of gold
To raise an army ; when five hundred men,
All stalwart warriors skilled the weapons five
To wield, and valiant as himself and true,
The Prince enrolled, the Guru spake and said :

“ Now lift thy banner up aloft, and lead
Thy warriors forth ; lo, Kanda, thy colleague,
Shall go with thee, thy second in command,
And trusted counsellor ; but bear in mind
These words of mine : the maiden at whose touch
Leaves turn to gold, take even her to wife ;
And when the throne is thine, make her thy queen,
And make my son thy chaplain. Now march on,
And rest not till thou sittest on the throne,
Hewing thy way to it through all that dare
Oppose thee ; as a thirsty elephant,
The leader of a mighty herd, rests not,
But cuts his way through thickest jungle growth
Until the water pools are reached ; so seek
The water that shall consecrate thee “ Lord
Of Elephants.” Now while thy natal stars
Are in the house of Royal-fortune met,
And thy doomed uncles' occupy the fell

Abodes of Rahu and his brother Ketu,
Strike home and hard, and thou wilt certes win !
But ere thou goest treasure up these words,
And closely weave thy life upon their warp :
Do that by day which may enable thee
To pass the night in peaceful slumbers sweet ;
Do that through eight months of the circling year
Which may the rainy season happy make ;
Throughout thy youthful prime do that which may
Fill up thy life's sear days with happy hours ;
Aye, more, do that throughout thy mortal life,
Which may, enfreeing thee from future births,
Crown thee with bliss eternal. Fare thee well ! ”

Thus cheerfully dismissed, the valiant Prince
Stepped round his wise preceptor thrice with hands ⁽⁶⁾
Conjoined in meet farewell. He then unfurled
His banner bright, and sallied blithely forth
With his small force, that quickly gathered strength
As further north it moved ; and when a halt
Was called at Kanda-mountain, it had swelled
To thrice its bulk.

Now in the wealthy fief
Of Siva, one of Pandu's hostile uncles, they
Encamped ; and Siva even at that time,
O'erseeing the toiling reapers, in his fields
Sojourned. His only daughter, Pali, ranked
Foremost amongst the island's fairest maids ;
And she, now riding a resplendent wain

With her fair damsels, as the full-orbed Moon
Rides midst the planets in autumnal skies,
And by a gorgeous retinue accompanied,
Of men-at-arms, came bringing noontide fare
Unto her father's reapers. As her way
Lay by his camp, Prince Pandu saw her pass—
Their glances met ; and as a bird new-caged,
Leaps at the bars, deep yearning to rejoin
His mate outside, his heart within his breast
Leapt madly ; and he jumped into his car,
And driving up abreast the Princess' wain,
Despite her armed guards who, startled by
The strange light in his eyes gave way, he asked
The maid in gentlest accents whither she was bound
And when she smiling sweetly fluted out
Her answer, he, emboldened, craved a share
Of food she bore. Most graciously she stopped
Her wain, stepped down and 'neath a banyan's shade
She bade the Prince and all his warriors sit ;
Then in a golden bowl she served the Prince
With cates ; the rest she served in banyan leaves,
When lo, the leaves all turned turned to solid gold
Beneath her touch ! Thereat the Prince's soul
Leapt up with joy, as he the Brahman's words
Recalled, and thought, " Here is the very maid,
Or, goddess rather, as her every look
And act proclaim her, chosen by the gods
My queen to be : in sooth, she reigns the queen
Already of my bosom, crowned by love—
Yea, the goddess of my worship, shrined

Within my soul her beauteous image stands ! ”

So mused he, happy in his new-found love,
While moved the stately Princess with her maids,
Like Rhumba 'midst her Apsarases, (7) her guests
Attending ; her soft eyes, by love illumed,
Vied in their lustre with the brilliant pearl
That dangled from her dainty nose and kissed
Her luscious lips, like a bright-coated bee
That lingers o'er a partly-opened rose
Of crimson hue ; the zone of golden bells
That girt her slender waist, and ankle rings,
Seductive music made with every step
She took ! Then lo, another miracle :
The viands grew not less, and it but seemed
That one man's portion had been drawn away
When all had had their fill ! Wherefore, thenceforth
The Princess they Suvannapali named,
Since she so rich in virtues proved herself,
The merit springing from her guilelessness.

The wayside banquet done, the Princess sent
Her damsels onward with the sumpter-wain,
Her escort with them ; and then, nothing loath,
She let the Prince to fold her in his arms,
To drink the nectar from her lotus mouth,
To raise her up, as though she were a child,
Into his battle-car, and drive away :
What though he was a stranger unto her,
What though she was but an untutored maid,

What though her parents were her highest gods,
What though her lover was her father's foe,
What though death were the sequel to her step—
She nothing recked in heaven or on earth,
Save him whose arms enringed her ! So they drove
Unto the camp, and that same evening, hand
In hand enclasped, paced round the nuptial fire,
While Kanda sang the blessings o'er the pair,
And mountains echoed back the festal shout.

The next day broke blood-red with clash of arms :
For stung unto the soul, Prince Siva threw
His principedom's martial might against the bold
Abductor of his daughter, as he deemed
Prince Pandu. Fierce the battle joined, but soon
Concluded with the rout of Siva's forces,
Of whom but few survived the dreadful shock
And fled. Lo, Kalhanágar, Battle-town,
Marks now that stricken field. Another wave
Of battle, raised by Pali's brothers five,
Against Prince Pandu rolled the selfsame day.
But like the first, it broke and fell in ruddy foam
Upon a rocky front by Kanda reared,
And Field of Blood the spot today is named.

Pandu, now leader of a mighty host,
Swept onward, like the god of war himself,
From triumph unto triumph ; the king's sons,
All save the eldest, who succeeding his
Dead father, ruled until he was deposed

For favouring still his conquering nephew's cause—
All these opposed him, and defeated fled
With all their cohorts, like Asura hosts
Before the legions under Indra's lead.
From stronghold unto stronghold routed, fled
They headlong, pausing not until they reached
The royal capital. Then Pandu camped
In Dhummarakka's captured mountain fort.

And in those mountain wilds a Yakkhni dwelt,
Named Cetiya ; 'twas her wont at times to leave
Her lonely lotus pond and roam abroad,
The form assuming of a mare, milk-white
Her well-turned limbs and body gleamed ;
With flowing mane and tail and pink-rimmed eyes,
And feet and nostrils of a ruddy hue,
She worthier seemed a god to bear than man.
This wondrous steed, a warrior chanced to spy,
And told the Prince ; armed with a twisted noose,
The hero stole towards her, but she fled
And he pursued her swiftly ; seven times
She circled round the pond with him in close
Pursuit ; then making for the neighbouring bank
Of Ganga, plunged into the swirling flood ;
Emerging thence she seven times around
The Dhummarakka mountain flew, the hero still
Close on her heels ; and yet thrice more the pond
She circled ere she plunged yet once again
Into the Ganga's foam ; but there he closed

On her, and seized her by her copious mane ;
 Then grasped a palm-leaf floating down the stream,
 And lo, it turned into a glittering sword,
 By gods so willed ; the blade he brandished high
 With threatening looks ; whereat, " O spare me, Lord,"
 She whined, " and I will help thee win this realm ;
 I am a Yakkhni who can serve thy need ;
 And well thy prowess hath subdued my will."
 So saying she allowed him lead her thence
 Nose-roped, and ever after him she bore,
 Submissive to his will, with winged speed,
 And helped him with her counsel sage withal.

His army rested and recouped, the Prince
 Resumed his northward march, and halted not
 Till he Aritta's mountain stronghold gained ;
 And there encamped within an easy march
 Of Upatissa, the Imperial Capital.
 Thereat his uncles all uneasy grew,
 And raised a monster force, such as the isle
 Had never trod since Rama in the hoary past⁽⁸⁾
 Encountered Rāvana for fair Sita's sake ;
 And leaving Pali's sire behind, to watch
 Their eldest brother, whom they trusted not,
 The princes led their arméd myriads forth,
 Resolved to conquer Fate—a trifling task
 With such an army—so they fondly deemed !

Forewarned, Prince Pandu braced his men to meet
 The coming storm, undaunted by the odds ;

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But when at eye-shot reach the enemy loomed,
That sight the bravest heart might have appalled :
For with its brightly armoured elephants,
So like a moving range of blazing hills,
Its flaming weapons, clattering chariots, tramp
Of steeds, all overhung with rolling clouds
Of ruddy dust, it seemed a forest fire,
Consuming all to ashes in its path ;
Or an approaching cyclone seemed, with clouds
Emitting lightning and the thunder's roar.
Advancing thus in brave array, they built
A battlemented camp beyond the reach
Of hostile missiles ; then besieged the Mount,
Encircling it completely. Pandu sought
The wily Yakkhni's counsel, and she said :
" Wealth, argument and stratagem and force—
These four predicaments rule all events
Of life ; occasion now demands, O Prince,
The use of policy and warrants it.
So send thou to the hostile camp a band
Of chosen warriors with their weapons well
Concealed beneath their raiment ; let them bear
Rich presents for thine uncles, and withal
A message saying, thou art following
The embassy to sue for peace thyself.
Thus lulled by humble words thy foes will think :
' Let be, we'll take him prisoner when he comes ; '
But let thy warriors when they hear me neigh,
Cut down thine uncles with their hidden swords."
The Prince did even as the Yakkhni said,

And when his envoys had admittance gained,
He riding her, as she did furthermore
Advise, led forth a numerous force well armed ;
And when the entrance of the camp they reached,
Full loudly did the Yakkhni neigh. Straightway
The Prince's men within and those without
Responded with a mighty shout, and fell
Upon their panic-stricken foes and reaped
A dreadful harvest, rearing with the skulls
A grisly mound ; which when the Prince beheld,
And saw his uncles' skulls there uppermost,
He straight exclaimed, " 'Tis like a heap of gourds " ;
Wherefore they called the place " The Town of
Gourds,"
Which to this day retains its ancient name.

Thus did the doom the high gods foreordained,
Though shunned with anxious care and toil so long,
O'ertake its princely victims in the end.
But the victorious Pandu going hence,
A wonder-city founded on a site
Appointed by the gods ; with scented groves
And crystal lakes and founts the city spread
O'er many a league of ground ; and dwellings fair
With tree-embowered streets and verdant parks,
Resounded with the hum of bright-faced folk
Of all communities and gilds and creeds,
All happy in their several zones assigned ;
And every sect had its own fretted shrines
And fanes all by the cunning hands designed

Of master craftsmen ; public halls and homes
For every human need abounded there ;
And the whole city with its suburbs vast,
Was ever clean and sweet, maintained by folk
Appointed for the task, Chandālas named.
And when this earthly paradise the Prince
Accomplished, in the midst thereof he reared
A stately palace for himself, and named
It Anuradhapur. And then he bade
Them bring the royal sunshade, spotless white,
And rich with many a sparkling stone and pearl ;
This purified with water from a natural pool,
As Vedic rites ordained, the Brahmans raised
Above him and his spouse, amid the roar
Of joyful throngs and burst of minstrelsy.
And next from out the selfsame lotus-pool—
Thereafter named the Pool of Victory—
He and his consort fair received the shower
Of regal consecration. And the King,
True to his promise unto Kanda brave,
Made him his Chaplain ; and conferred on all
His friends, both men and Yakkhas, offices
According to their merits ; compassed thus
With trusty counsellors and loyal friends,
King Pandu in Anuradhapur,
That soon became the wonder of the world
For wealth and splendour, reigned as sovereign lord
Supreme o'er all the Kingdom of the Lions,
The peoples' King, full seventy blissful years.



NOTES

EPISODE I—*The Coming of Wijaya.*

1. "*Gobbs.*"—Backwaters on the Ceylon coast. For a full description of *Gobbs*, see Sir Emerson Tennent's "*Ceylon.*"
2. "*Yakkhas.*"—Yakshas in Sanscrit. They are attendants on Kubera, the God of Wealth. Like the Widhyadaras, another order of mythical beings, the Yakshas possess magical faculties.
3. "*The beast's love for his son.*"—Buddhists believe that when love towards all creatures is actually present in one's heart, nothing can injure one.
4. "*My evil Karma.*"—The Hindu doctrine of *Karma* is bound up with their belief in re-birth.
5. *Sakkra.*—Another name for Indra, the Hindu Jupiter. Curiously enough he is represented as being subservient to Buddha.
6. "*Lotus seeds delicious plucked.*"—"At some of the tanks where the lotus grows in profusion in Ceylon, I tasted the seeds enclosed in the torus of the flowers and found them white and delicately flavoured, not unlike the pine cone of the Apennines." Sir Emerson Tennent in "*Ceylon.*"
7. "*Faulchion, battleaxe*", etc.—They are the five weapons of a completely equipped Hindu warrior.
8. "*The marriage garland.*"—The garland used in a *Swayamwara*, or a maiden's choosing of her husband.

9. "*Wedded Gandharva-wise.*"—"The voluntary union of a maiden and her lover, one must know, to be the Gandharva rite." The Laws of Manu.
10. "*Jungle cock's reveille call.*"—For an account of this bird and the golden-oriole, see Sir E. Tennent's "Ceylon."
11. "*Naming it Thambrapani from the dust.*"—"The soil of Ceylon is composed of laterite which crumbles into a red dust." Prof. Geiger.
12. "*Households of the eighteen guilds*".—The four main castes or *Varnas*, namely, the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra, which compose Hindu society, are again divided into eighteen sub-castes or guilds, according to the various occupations, such as agriculture, trade, weaving, carpentry, etc. At the present time there are many more than this number. It is very curious that the *chandalas* (scavengers), usually considered out-castes, are included in the list.

Cf. *The Laws of Manu*, Prof. Buhler's translation, Chapter X.

13. "*In Lakshmi's name.*"—"Lakshmi, or Sree, is the Goddess of wealth and good fortune. She was one of the *ratnas* or gems that came to the surface when the ocean was churned by Gods and Demons for the celebrated *Amrita* or nectar of immortality. Lakshmi is usually represented with a lotus in her hand. Hindus often say, "Lakshmi has

come", when fortune smiles, and "Lakshmi has flown", when in misfortune.

EPISODE II—*The Builder of Anuradhapura.*

1. "*The Mansions of the Sun.*"—"The sun-god is the deity, they (the Kshatriyas) are most anxious to propitiate; and in his honour they fearlessly expend their blood in battle from the hope of being received into his mansion. Their highest heaven is accordingly the *Bhanthan* or *Bhanuloca*, 'the region of the sun'." Todd's Rajasthan.
2. "*Radha hath her Krishna.*"—Krishna is the Apollo of the Hindu pantheon. The love romance of Radha and Krishna is fully dealt with by Jayadeva in his "*Gita Govinda.*"
3. "*The merry month of Phalgun.*"—"Phalgun or Spring is ushered in with the *Ahairea*, or Spring Hunt. The preceding day the Rana distributes to all his chiefs and servants either a dress of green or some portion thereof, in which all appear habited on the morrow to slay the boar to Gouri, the Ceres of the Rajputs."
4. "*Dharma, Artha, Kama.*"—This may be rendered Religion, Profit, Pleasure, a knowledge of which, according to the Vedas, forms the complete education of a man of the world.
5. "*Sucked his doctrines*", etc.—"So instantaneous is the response of nature to the influence of returning moisture, that in a single day the green hue of reviving vegetation begins to tint the saturated ground." Sir Emerson Tennent's "*Ceylon.*"

6. "*Stepped round his wise preceptor.*"—The Hindu custom of taking leave of a revered person. It is not now generally followed, but circumambulating a temple or shrine is still in vogue.
7. "*Like Rhumba 'midst her Apsarases.*"—Rhumba is the queen of the mythical beings known as Apsarases, who are the Houris of Indra's paradise.
8. "*Rama in the hoary past*".—The story of Rama, the hero of the great Indian epic, the *Ramayana*, has often been communicated to European readers in verse and prose translations. The reference in the text is to the war waged by Rama against Ravana in Lanka, or Ceylon. Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, who had abducted Sita, the consort of Rama, to avenge an insult, was attacked by Rama and his army of forest folk, who are called, perhaps totemistically, "monkeys and bears," in his stronghold of Lanka. The war ended with the slaying of Ravana by Rama in single combat, and the recovery of Sita. See Romesh Dutt's condensed metrical rendering in the *Everyman Library* series.

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